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A U.N. compound in southern Iraq, with a defaced Saddam poster

Kosovo: The U.N. handled the First Pillar, police and justice, and the second, civil administration, while the E.U. took charge of economic reform, and the OSCE handled democratization and the formation of institutions.

The result has been a wholesale disaster, which, if it can serve for anything, must be taken as a textbook illustration of how not to proceed in postwar Iraq. The acronym UNMIK closely resembles the Albanian word *anmik*, which happens to mean *enemy*, and it was not long before this linguistic parallelism became a source of grim humor among Kosovar Albanians. Today, the leading Kosovar journalists fill their newspapers with commentaries on the bitter lessons of "reconstruction" by the U.N., the E.U., the OSCE, and their handmaiden, the "humanitarian mafia."

The electric power situation, still a contentious topic today, was problematic from the beginning of reconstruction. In that same hot July 2000, in the very same plant that failed to produce electricity, I interviewed the chief technical officer of the Kosovo power system, an Albanian. I listened to his litany of complaints about the foreigners—the lack of resources, and the endless appeals to his workers to commit their time

and energy whether or not they were paid. What kept the power system going, he said, was "personal appeals and patriotism." In the second quarter of 2000, the 10,000 employees of the system had each been paid a total of 150 deutsche marks, or \$77. At the end of our discussion, he suddenly turned to me plaintively and said, "Most of the foreigners I have met here don't seem to care what happens. You seem interested. You must help me. What is your advice to me?" The moment was as disturbing to me as it must have been to him.

Now, nearly four years after the fighting stopped, Kosovo still endures a two-hour power cut every four hours, night and day, and even that schedule is by no means reliable—this in a province that, before the Milosevic era, exported power for hard currency to neighboring Albania and Greece.

Ibrahim Rexhepi, economics editor of the Prishtina daily *Koha Ditore*, wrote on March 21, "The United States promises that the Iraqi people will have a completely different life after the war—salaries, repaired roads, and electricity around the clock—whereas Kosovo, four years after the war, is facing low salaries, a disastrous economy, roads rebuilt and then torn up again, and power cuts, as well as cuts in the supply of water and heat." Estimates of the funds disbursed for the reconstruction of Kosovo range